

# Selected Highlights of Women's History

United States and Connecticut  
1773 to the Present



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**A**s we celebrate Women's History Month, the PCSW is pleased to offer this "Selected Highlights of Women's History – United States and Connecticut, 1848 to the Present." We have compiled these highlights from the following sources:

Archiving Early America <<http://www.earlyamerica.com/>>

Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. Executive Director:  
Leslie Lindenauer, Ph.D. <<http://www.cwhf.org/>>

Decker-O'Neill, Lois. The Women's Book of World Records and Achievements.  
Anchor Press: Garden City, New York, 1979.

Encyclopedia Britannica: Women in American History  
<<http://www.search.eb.com/women/>>

Faude, Wilson H. and Joan W. Friedland. Connecticut Firsts. Globe Pequot  
Press: Chester, CT, 1996.

Great Women in Connecticut History. The Permanent Commission on the Status  
Of Women: Hartford, CT, 1986.

Greenspan, Karen. The Timetables of Women's History. Simon and Schuster:  
New York, 1994.

National Women's Hall of Fame. <<http://www.greatwomen.org/>>

Women have made many contributions, large and small, to the history of our state and our nation. Learning from our past helps us to shape a more equitable future. We hope you find useful information and inspiration in this booklet.

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*Updated January 2003 by Melissa Griswold, Intern, Salem College*  
*Updated February 2004 by Nicole Graf, Intern, University of Connecticut*

1773

- **Phillis Wheatley** published 39 poems in London, making her America's first black poet ([www.earlyamerica.com](http://www.earlyamerica.com)).

1777

- The Continental Congress adopts the Stars-and-Stripes, sewn by **Betsy Ross** as the national flag ([www.earlyamerica.com](http://www.earlyamerica.com)).

1829

- **Maria Miller W. Stewart** addressed a mixed-gender audience, the first American-born woman to do so. During her speeches, "Stewart called on all black Americans to develop racial pride, unity and self-improvement through the expansion of educational and occupational rights," ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).

1848

- The Seneca Falls Women's Rights Conference organized by **Lucretia Mott** and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** marks the beginning of an organized women's movement in the U.S. Soon afterward Stanton and **Susan B. Anthony** met, starting a political partnership that would lead the women's movement into the next century.

1849



- **Elizabeth Blackwell** is the first woman to receive a medical degree as a doctor. Her degree is awarded from Geneva Medical College (now Hobart) in New York.

- **Amelia Jenks Bloomer** edits and publishes *Lily* from a printing shop in Seneca Falls, NY. This is the first prominent women's rights newspaper.

1850

- The first national women's rights convention attracts over 1,000 participants to Worcester, Massachusetts, some from as far away as California. Only a lack of space keeps hundreds more from attending. Annual national conferences are held through 1860 (except in 1857).
- Quaker physicians establish the Female (later Women's) Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia to give women a chance to learn

medicine. Due to threats against them, the first students graduate under police guard.

1851

- In her “Ain’t I a Woman” speech, **Sojourner Truth**, an escaped slave, states, “If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!”
- **Myrtilla Minder** opens the first school to train black women as teachers in Washington, D.C.



1852

- Uncle Tom’s Cabin, written by Connecticut resident **Harriet Beecher Stowe** (pictured) is published. This work puts a human face on the atrocities of slavery. It is an enormous bestseller. Stowe’s friend and colleague, **Elizabeth Barrett Browning**, says it is the most successful book printed by a man or a woman (Great Women in Connecticut History).



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*“Man cannot fulfill his destiny alone, he cannot redeem his race unaided... The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, because in the degradation of women the very foundations of life are poisoned at their source.”*

*-Lucretia Mott*

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1855

- **Lucy Stone** becomes the first woman recorded to keep her own name after marriage. This sets a trend among women, and her followers are consequently known as “Lucy Stoners.”



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30<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
PCSW

Continuing Progress for Connecticut Women

1857

- **Elizabeth Blackwell, Emily Blackwell, and Marie Zakrzeska** found the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children. This is the first hospital staffed by women.

1858

- **Lucy Stone** protests women's lack of representation in the legal system by refusing to pay her taxes in Orange, New Jersey.

1859

- Our Nig, by **Harriet Wilson** is the first novel written by an African-American to be published.
- **Emeline Roberts Jones** is acknowledged as the first female dentist in America ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).

1860

- Connecticut is one of the first states to enact laws prohibiting abortion.

1863

- **Mary Ann Shad Cary** establishes *The Provincial Freeman*, a newspaper that informs slaves about the possibilities of living in Canada. She is the first African-American newspaperwoman in North America.

1864

- **Mary Walker** from Oswego, New York, an assistant surgeon during the civil war, is the first woman to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

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*"When so rich a harvest is before us, why do we not gather it? All is in our hands if we will but use it."*

*-Elizabeth Seton*

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1865

- The Federal Government establishes The National Freedman's Bureau in Washington, D.C. to aid the over 30,000 Blacks who fled the Capitol after the Emancipation due to the efforts of **Josephine Griffing**. A Connecticut native, Mrs. Griffing also plays a major role in organizing the Universal Franchise Association of D.C. and serves as president of the area's Women's Suffrage Association ([Great Women in Connecticut History](#)).

1867

- The Cigar maker's union is the first union to accept women and African-American members.

1869

- **Susan B. Anthony** (pictured), **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, and **Martha Coffin Pelham Wright** found the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA).



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*"There shall never be another season of silence until women have the same rights men have on this green earth."*

*-Susan B. Anthony*

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1870

- **Sarah Winnemucca**, a Paiute from Nevada who speaks five languages, serves as an interpreter at Camp McDermitt in Nevada. She will later act as a representative of her people before the Secretary of State and President Hayes. As a result of her work, Congress will approve a land grant in Nevada for Indian use.



- Iowa is the first state to admit a woman, **Arbella Mansfield**, to the bar.
- **Maria Sanford**, a native of Old Saybrook, Connecticut, is the first female professor in the United States (Connecticut Firsts, 1996).

1872

- Congress passes a law that gives female federal employees the same pay for the same work as men. (120 years later Caucasian women, on average, are paid 72 cents to every dollar men are paid. Black women earn 65 cents for every dollar men do, and Latino women earn 54 cents for every dollar men earn).
- **Susan B. Anthony** and eight other women are arrested for voting.



- **Victoria Claflin Woodhull** is the first female candidate for President of the U.S. She champions such diverse causes as women's suffrage, free love, and the Greenback movement.

1874

- The National Women's Christian Temperance Union (NCTU) is founded. This organization, which fights alcohol and the effects of drunkenness on American society, will later have the largest women's membership of any organization. Due in part to its members' efforts, the Volstead Act is passed in 1922, making prohibition law.
- The NCTU strongly endorses suffrage as a means for women to protect the home and family. This connection makes the liquor industry a powerful opponent to suffrage.

1875

- In the case of *Miner v. Hoppersatt* the Supreme Court rules that, although women are considered persons under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, they are not entitled to vote.

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*"Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights and nothing less."*  
-Susan B. Anthony

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1876

- **Julia Smith** of Glastonbury, Connecticut is the first woman ever to translate the Bible into other languages. She translates it once from Latin, twice from Greek, and twice from Hebrew, printing them all at her own expense (Connecticut Firsts, 1996).

1879

- **Belva Lockwood** of Connecticut is the first woman lawyer admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. Her years of lobbying pay off when Congress passes legislation permitting women to practice in all federal courts.



1881

- **Clara Barton** founds the American Red Cross. A schoolteacher and clerk in the U.S. Patent Office, Barton found her true calling when the Civil War broke out and she began to assemble and distribute supplies to Union soldiers. Knowing that nurses were urgently needed, she broke through barriers and began to administer aid on the battlefields. After the war Barton coordinated a national effort to locate missing soldiers. She became involved with relief work in Europe and was impressed with the International Red Cross. As a result, she lobbied for American





ratification of the Red Cross Treaty. After its acceptance, she serves as President of the organization for many years

(<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=17>)

- In an Atlanta church basement, **Sophia Packard and Harriet Giles** began teaching 11 black women. In 1884, John D. Rockefeller donated enough money to provide the women and school security. In 1901, the school, named Spelman Seminary (after Rockefeller's mother-in-law), was able to award college degrees and in 1904 became Spelman College. Now this college, along with five other African-American institutions in Atlanta, is known as the Atlanta University Center ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

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*"All talk of women's rights is moonshine. Women have every right. They only have to exercise them."*

*-Victoria Claffin Woodhull*

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1882

- **Mary Hall**, who studied law with John Hooker, one of Hartford's most respected lawyers, makes a bid for formal recognition. In an open courtroom four attorneys administer her exam. She passes, but the Hartford County Bar Association feels that judicial decision is necessary. The Connecticut Supreme Court upholds Hall's right to be an attorney and for four decades she primarily handles matters pertaining to wills and property, mostly for women ([ww.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/hall.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/hall.html)).

1885

- **Emeline Robert Jones** of New Haven and Danielson is the first woman dentist to travel from town to town in eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island. Her husband had taught her to drill and fill teeth, and upon his death she continued his practice (Connecticut Firsts, 1996).

1887

- **Beatrice Fox Auerbach** is born. In her management of a Hartford department store, G. Fox & Co., she will seek to improve labor conditions for more than 3,000 employees. She will introduce several reforms in the workplace including sick pay, retirement benefits, and the five-day, forty-hour workweek. Hers will also be the first major retail store to hire blacks in significant jobs ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/auerbach.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/auerbach.html)).

1889

- Connecticut grants Druggist (Pharmacist) licenses to women.





- **Jane Adams** founds the Hull House in Chicago, one of the first settlement houses in America. The Hull House provides programs such as day care and adult education and inspires many similar programs across the nation. Adams is known as an advocate for the urban poor, although she is later criticized for opposing World War I. She wins the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 ([http://www.star.niu.edu/indepth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/indepth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).

1890

- **Dr. Ida Gray**, an African-American born in Clarksville, TX, is the first female dentist in the U.S. She runs a successful practice in Cincinnati.
- The American Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association merge and become the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

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*"I was taught that the way of progress is neither swift nor easy."*  
-Marie Curie

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1891

- **Lydia Kamekeha Liliuokalani**, the last ruler of the Hawaiian Islands, becomes Queen. Queen Liliuokalani is an opponent to annexation by the U.S. She is deposed in 1893.



1892

- The introduction of women's basketball occurs at Smith College; however, the rules were modified to accommodate women's "fragile" bodies. Four years later the first women's intercollegiate basketball game is played between Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley on April 4<sup>th</sup> ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

1895

- **Lucy Terry Prince**, a former slave from Rhode Island, is the first woman to address the Supreme Court. She successfully defends a land claim.

1896

- Margaret Murry in Washington founds the National Association of Colored Women. **Mary Church Terrell** is its first president.



- **Annie Jump Cannon** (pictured) begins her work at the Harvard Observatory. Collaborating with **Willamena Flemming**, she undertakes the project of recording, classifying, and cataloguing all of the stars down to the ninth magnitude. Cannon devises the idea of cataloguing the stars by temperature, and the system is universally adopted. More than a quarter of a million stars are classified using her system. The work is published

in the Draper Catalogue and the Draper Catalogue Extension, works that are of enormous value to the scientific community

(<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=33>).

- The National Federation of Afro-American Women and the National League of Colored Women merged to create the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) with **Mary Church Terrell** as the organization's first president. The organization's first objectives were job creation, childcare and pay equity. Currently, NACW's primary focus remains equal pay and childcare ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

1898

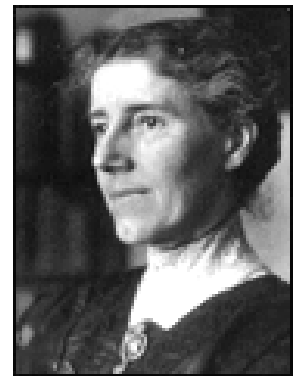
- **Mable Osgood Wright** establishes the first bird sanctuary in the United States, called the Birdcraft Museum and Sanctuary, and is the founder of the Connecticut Audubon Society ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).



- **Charlotte Perkins Gilman** publishes Women in Economics. In this work, the liberal-minded author argues for the socialization of housework through the establishment of communal kitchens and nurseries so that women could work outside the home and become economically independent. In a more famous piece, a short story entitled "The Yellow Wallpaper," Gilman writes about a woman's mental anguish and progressive paranoia when subjected to the

so-called "rest cure" for female depression

([www.gale.com/freresrc/womenhst/gilman.html](http://www.gale.com/freresrc/womenhst/gilman.html)).



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Continuing Progress for Connecticut Women

## 1901

- **Emily Dunning Barringer** of New Canaan, Connecticut graduates from Cornell University Medical School. Upon graduation, she takes the qualifying exam for an internship at Gouverneur Hospital of New York, but despite her high marks she is denied due to her gender. Reapplying with the support of political and religious figures one year later Barringer is accepted, becoming the first woman physician to receive post-graduate surgical training in hospital service and the first female ambulance surgeon. She would go on to serve as President of the American Medical Women's Association in 1942, and as Chairman of the Special Committee of the American Medical Women's Association. She would also be decorated by the King of Serbia for championing the service of female physicians during WWI (<http://www.cwhf.org/browse/BARRINGER>).



## 1908

- The U.S. Supreme Court declares unconstitutional protective legislation for women workers in *Muller v. Oregon*. This legislation stated, "That no female (shall) be employed in any mechanical establishment, or factory, or laundry in this state more than ten hours during any one day. The hours of work may be so arranged as to permit the employment of females at any time so that they shall not work more than ten hours during the twenty-four hours of any one day" (U.S. Supreme Court).

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*"A sphere is not made up of one, but of an infinite number of circles; women have diverse gifts and to say that women's sphere is the family circle is a mathematical absurdity."*

*-Maria Mitchell*

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## 1909

- The National Trade and Professional School for Women is founded by **Nannie Burroughs** in Washington, D.C. The school's motto is: "We specialize in the wholly impossible."

1910

- **Madame C.J. Walker** (pictured) is the first woman of any race to become a self-made millionaire. Walker opens her corporation in Denver, CO. Her beauty products will eventually rival those of **Helena Rubenstein** and **Elizabeth Arden**. Her company will provide job opportunities as salespeople that people of color did not have at that time.



- The Woman's Suffrage Party (a political party) forms in New York City.
- **Louisa Capetillo** creates *Woman*, the first Puerto Rican feminist magazine.
- The governor of Illinois asks Connecticut native **Dr. Alice Hamilton** to act as special investigator for a new state commission on industrial disease. The result of Dr. Hamilton's appointment is a sweeping reform of working conditions and new laws passed in many states

providing compensation for disabilities caused by poisonous fumes, gases, and dusts. In 1915, Dr. Hamilton is asked to undertake a study of industrial disease by the U.S. Commission of Labor, work that would continue through World War I. She would later study industries in all forty-eight states ([Great Women in Connecticut History](#)).

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*"I am the only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do."*  
-Helen Keller

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1911

- **Harriet Quimby** of New York is the first woman to qualify for an American aviation pilot's license.
- **Katherine Gibbs** founds the first secretarial school in Massachusetts, which not only educates women in secretarial skills, but also in business and the liberal arts.

1912

- **Juliette Gordon Low** (pictured) forms the first American unit of Girl Guides. This organization later becomes the Girl Scouts of America.



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1913

- **Katherine Houghton Hepburn** organizes the Hartford Equal Franchise League. Over the next twelve years she would devote herself to the fight for women's suffrage, attending street rallies, parades, picketing the White House, and debating the right to vote in Carnegie Hall. After the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Ms. Hepburn would find a new cause: birth control. She spoke in hearings before the U.S. Senate, and went on to serve as legislative chair of the American Birth Control League for many years ([Great Women in Connecticut History](#)).

1916

- **Margaret Sanger** (pictured) and her sister, **Ethel Byrne**, open the first U.S. birth control clinic in Brooklyn, NY. It is shut down ten days later; both women are tried and imprisoned. Sanger would continue her fight, however, going on to found the American Birth Control League (later known as Planned Parenthood) and living to see the birth control pill approved by the FDA ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).



- **Jeannette Rankin** of Montana becomes the first woman elected to U.S. Congress. She serves two separate terms. A committed pacifist, Rankin is the only member of Congress to oppose both World Wars. (<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=121>).

1917

- **Emma Goldman** serves 15 days in prison for distributing information on contraception.
- Military policewomen are employed by the state of Connecticut to patrol military bases in the state.
- During WWI more women are employed, many of them working in jobs in heavy industry, mining, chemical manufacturing, and automobile and railway plants. They also run streetcars, conduct trains, and do almost everything that men were responsible for before they were called to fight overseas.
- **Loretta Walsh** becomes the first Yeoman in the United States Navy.

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*"The day will come when man will recognize woman as his peer not only at fireside, but in councils of the nation. Then and only then, will there be the perfect comradeship, the ideal union between the sexes that shall result in the highest development of the race."*

*-Susan B. Anthony*

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## 1918

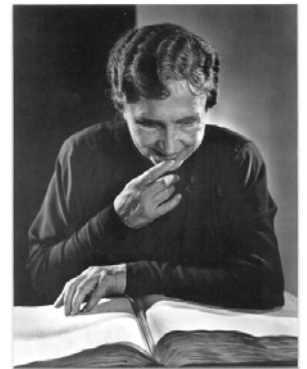
- Because of WWI, women are deemed a necessity in the workforce to replace men's labor. At this time an estimated 1,400,000 women are in the paid labor force, most of who will be forced out and back into domestic lives at the war's end ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

## 1919

- **Therese Bonney**, a war photographer during WWII, founds the first American illustrated press service in Paris.
- **Opha M. Johnson** is the first woman enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserves ([www.userpages.aug.com](http://www.userpages.aug.com)).
- **Alice Hamilton** becomes the first female professor at Harvard Medical School. She is a Professor of Industrial Medicine and conducts research on toxic substances in the workplace ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/hamilton.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/hamilton.html)).

## 1920

- Congress establishes The Women's Bureau as part of the Department of Labor. Its purpose is to make standards and policies that promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.
- The American Civil Liberties Union is formed. Social reformers involved include: **Jane Addams**, **Helen Gurley Flynn**, and **Helen Keller** (pictured).
- The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment grants women suffrage under the United States Constitution.



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*"Perhaps some day men will raise a tablet reading in letters of gold: 'All honor to women, the first disenfranchised class in history who unaided by any political party, won enfranchisement by its own effort alone, and achieved the victory without the shedding of a drop of human blood. All honor to the women of the world!'"*

*-Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

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## 1921

- **Lillian Gilbreth**, U.S. engineer, becomes an honorary member of the previously all male Society of Industrial Engineers.

## 1922

- **Rebecca Latimer Felton** of Georgia is appointed to the U.S. Senate. She is the first woman to become a senator serving only two days, "relinquishing her seat to Senator Walter F. George following his special election," (<http://www.roselawnmuseum.com/history/felton.html>).

## 1923

- The Connecticut chapter of Planned Parenthood is formed



- Connecticut resident **Alice Paul** drafts the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). At the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1848 Women's Rights Convention, Paul introduces the "Lucretia Mott Amendment" which reads, "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction." In the early 1940s Paul rewrites the amendment to read, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of

sex." The amendment is introduced in every session of Congress until it is finally passed in 1972 (<http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/era.htm>). However, the Constitution still has not been amended.

## 1924

- **Ora Washington** becomes the first African American woman to win the American Tennis Association singles title.
- **Nellie Taylor Ross** of Wyoming becomes the first woman elected governor of a state.

## 1925

- **Maria Tallchief** is born on the Osage Reservation in Oklahoma where her father was a tribal chief. Tallchief is often regarded as the greatest ballerina born in America.

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*"Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."*

*-Helen Keller*

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## 1926

- **Violet Neatly Anderson** is the first African-American woman to practice law in the Supreme Court.
- **Miriam “Ma” Ferguson** becomes governor of Texas.
- **Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt** of Hartford, Connecticut dies. A civic leader, philanthropist, and one of the first women in America to establish a major art collection and gallery of her own, Colt bequeaths it to the Wadsworth Atheneum upon her death.

## 1927

- **Vivien Kellems** begins manufacturing cable grips, used for pulling electrical cable cars through underground conduits. The Kellems Company is established in Westport, Connecticut. During WWII, the already successful business grows due to a government contract. Her involvement with the government also gives Ms. Kellems a first-hand look at its inefficiency and instills in her a passion for tax reform.

## 1930

- **Dr. Martha Wollstein** becomes the first female member of the American Pediatric Society.

## 1931

- The Association of Southern Women Against Lynching is founded by **Jessie Daniel Ames** of Texas.

## 1932

- **Mary Woolley** is appointed to be a delegate to the Conference on Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in Geneva by President Hoover. She thus becomes the first woman to represent the U.S. at an important diplomatic conference.
- **Hattie Wyatt Caraway** of Arkansas is the first woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate. While in office she will become the first woman to chair a committee, conduct Senate hearings, and preside over Senate sessions.



**Amelia Earhart** is the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, adding this accomplishment to her many records for speed and altitude. Three years later she will become the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean. In her final flight, Earhart will attempt to fly around the world, but her plane disappears over the Pacific Ocean before she can complete the feat ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)

[depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).

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*"Woman must not accept; she must change. She must not be awed by that which has been built up around her, she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression."*

*-Margaret Sanger*

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1933

- **Mary McLeod Bethune**, an African-American educator who was important in establishing the role of Black women in the effort to participate fully and equally in "the building of an ideal country," serves President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the only black woman advisor during the 1930's. She is the director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration and assists the Secretary of War in selecting officer candidates for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps during WWII. Bethune will also serve as an observer for the U.S. Department of State at the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco in 1945 (<http://www.blackhistory.eb.com>).



- **Rachel Taylor Milton** is the founder of the Urban League of Hartford and was later awarded the B'nai Brith's "Woman of the Year" award ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).



- **Nellie Taylor Ross**, former governor of Wyoming, becomes the first female director of the U.S. Mint.

- **Frances Perkins** of Massachusetts becomes U.S. Secretary of Labor, making her the first female Cabinet member in the United States. Perkins, a graduate of Mount Holyoke College who held several important labor-related jobs in the New York state government prior to her Cabinet appointment, leads the fight against the Great Depression. During her 12- year tenure she would establish the Labor Standards Bureau and strengthen labor law enforcement by the

states. She is also the chief architect of the Social Security Act. Perkins would later go on to serve as a member of the Civil Service Commission. The Department of Labor Headquarters is named for her (<http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/history/perkins.htm>).



1937

- **Anne O'Hare McCormick** is the first woman to receive a Pulitzer Prize in Journalism for her work as a foreign correspondent.

1938

- Democrat **Crystal Bird Fauset** of Pennsylvania is the first African-American woman to be elected to the House of Representatives.
- The Walsh-Healy Act creates a federal minimum wage. This wage does not apply to all workers—it generally excludes racial minorities and women.

1939

- The Birth Control Federation of America begins its pernicious “Negro Project.” This project is designed to control the population of people who are deemed less fit to raise children, rather than to provide women of color with a means to gain more control over their own reproductive rights.

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*“It was we, the people; not we the white male citizens; not yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union.”*

*-Susan B. Anthony*

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1940

- 59.9% of employed African-American women are domestic workers, 16% are still working in the fields, and 10.4% are working in non-domestic service organizations.
- **Dorothy Vredenburg Bush** becomes the first female secretary of the Democratic National Committee. She will oversee nine national conventions.
- **Bernie M. McPherson** wins a National Award for developing a welding process for weapons sites. This process greatly reduces production costs. Later she will become the first woman member of the American Welding Society.

1941

- During the attack on Pearl Harbor, **Annie G. Fox** was awarded the Purple Heart, being the first woman to receive this honor ([www.userpages.aug.com](http://www.userpages.aug.com)).

1942

- **Kathryn Betts Haggerty** is the first non-military policewoman in Connecticut.

- **Suzanne K. Langer**, a philosopher and a pioneer in the field of aesthetics, publishes her book, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art. After receiving her doctorate from Harvard in 1926, Langer taught Philosophy at such institutions as Radcliff, Wellesley, Smith, and Connecticut College. It is the publication of her book, however, that brings her notoriety and makes her a leading figure in the field of the philosophy of art ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/langer.htm](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/langer.htm)).

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*"There are two ways of meeting difficulties. You alter the difficulties or you alter yourself to meet them."*

*-Phyllis Bottome*

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#### 1943

- The owner of the Chicago Cubs starts the All American Girls Professional Baseball League. It lasts ten years.
- **Lt. Edith Greenwood** became the first woman to receive The Soldiers Medal for heroism at a military hospital in Yuma Arizona during WWII.
- For her duties as an air evacuation nurse, **Lt. Elsie S. Ott** is the first woman awarded the Air Medal ([www.userpagse.aug.com](http://www.userpagse.aug.com)).

#### 1944

- **Chase Going Woodhouse** is elected to Congress in Connecticut. She is only the second woman member of Congress from Connecticut, representing the Second District for two consecutive terms. Prior to being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, Ms. Woodhouse was a professor at several universities, and also served one term as Secretary of the State in Connecticut, the first Democratic woman to hold that position.

#### 1945

- The Equal Pay for Equal Work bill is introduced into Congress. It passes in 1963.
- Women industrial workers who took over for men who left during WWII begin to lose their jobs in large numbers to returning servicemen, although surveys show that 80% want to continue working.
- As the winner of a Fine Arts Commission contest, **Dr. Selma Burke** was awarded the task of creating a portrait for the Roosevelt dime. Because the coin is inscribed with the engraver's initials, Burke has never been properly credited for the portrait ([www.octobergallery.com/artists/burke.htm](http://www.octobergallery.com/artists/burke.htm)).

- **Eleanor Roosevelt** is named U.S. delegate to the United Nations and is instrumental in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights upon which much of international law has been based ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).



## 1946

- **Dorothy Shaver** is the first woman to assume the presidency of a major department store, Lord and Taylor.
- The United Nations establishes the Commission on the Status of Women.
- Author **Ann Petry** publishes her novel, *The Street*, which deals with black women's experiences in terms of race, class, and gender. This is the first book by an African-American woman to sell over one million copies. Petry, a graduate of the Connecticut College of Pharmacy, was previously appointed as a visiting professor of English at the University of Hawaii (1944-45), and lectured throughout the U.S. She would publish a total of eight books ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/petry.htm](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/petry.htm)).

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*"To be somebody, a woman does not have to be more like a man, but has to be more of a woman."*

*-Sally E. Shaywitz*

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## 1947

- **Ruth Fulton Benedict** of New York is the first woman to become a leader of a learned profession. She is the president of the American Anthropological Association. Benedict received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Columbia University in 1922 and studied under the renowned diffusionist Franz Boas. She eventually became his assistant and developed a close relationship with another famous female anthropologist, Margaret Mead. Benedict is well known for her research on different cultures around the world, and writes four books during her career ([http://www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/information/biography/abcde/benedict\\_ruth.html](http://www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/information/biography/abcde/benedict_ruth.html)).



- **Margaret Fogarty Rudkin**, founder of Pepperidge Farm, opens the company's first modern bakery. Pepperidge Farm started as a mail order business that Rudkin ran from her Norwalk, CT home. After the company becomes affiliated with Campbell's Soup Company in 1968 sales volume soars into the millions. Today, Pepperidge Farm has eight plants across the United States and still has its headquarters in Norwalk ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/rudkin.htm](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/rudkin.htm)).

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*"A good goal is like a strenuous exercise - it makes you stretch."*  
*-Mary Kay Ash*

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#### 1948

- **Margaret Chase Smith** (R-ME) becomes the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in her own right. In 1964, she becomes the first woman to run for the U.S. Presidency in the primaries of a major political party (Republican). She serves in the Senate until 1973.
- **Audrey Patterson** becomes the first black woman to win a medal in the Olympic Games, winning a bronze in the 200-meter sprint. Teammate **Alice Coachman** finishes as the only American woman to win a gold medal in that year's Olympics, leaping 5 feet 6 1/8 inches in the high-jump competition ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

#### 1949

- **Gwendolyn Elizabeth Brooks** wins the Pulitzer Prize for her book *Annie Allen*, a compilation of poems related to the life of a black girl growing up, and is the first black poet to do so ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

#### 1951

- **Lillian Vernon** becomes the first woman to found a company that would later be traded on a stock exchange ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).

#### 1952

- **Andrea Mead Lawrence** of Vermont is the first American, male or female, to win two gold medals skiing at the Olympics.

#### 1953

- President Eisenhower appointed Clare **Boothe Luce** as the first female ambassador from the U.S. to a major power, Italy. Luce was also a Congresswoman from Connecticut during the 1940's, an actress, a war correspondent, and a playwright.





1955



- On December 1, **Rosa Parks** (pictured left) takes the first nationally significant action in the Civil Rights movement. Her refusal to relinquish her bus seat to a white man sparks the successful bus boycott of Montgomery, Alabama.

- **Marian Anderson** makes her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, (pictured right) becoming the first black woman in that company. This signals the beginning of a new era for other black artists. She is later named a delegate to the United Nations and is a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Carter ([www.ctforum.org/cwhf.anderson.html](http://www.ctforum.org/cwhf.anderson.html)).



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*"The only people that never fail are those who never try."*  
-Ilka Chase

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1957

- **Anne W. Wheaton** serves under Eisenhower as the first presidential spokeswoman until 1961.



- **Althea Gibson** wins the Wimbledon singles title, making her the first African American to win Wimbledon. She goes on to win Wimbledon again the next year and also wins the French Open and U.S. Open singles titles, changing the face of tennis forever by breaking racial barriers ([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top\\_100/30/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top_100/30/)).

1958

- **Ethel Percy Andrus** founds the American Association of Retired Persons, creating an organization that addresses the needs of mature Americans in many aspects of their lives as well as lobbies on their behalf to government officials. Andrus, a respected expert on problems of the aging, advises the government on programs and



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policies. She also founds and edits *Modern Maturity*, AARP's magazine, which has the nation's largest circulation (<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=10>).

#### 1959

- **Lorraine Hansberry** wins the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for *A Raisin in the Sun*. This is the first play written by an African-American woman to appear on Broadway.
- **Anne Dervartanian**, of Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), became the first woman to attain E-9, the highest ranked position within the military ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

#### 1960

- The Food and Drug Administration approves the birth control pill for sale in the U.S. This safe and convenient form of birth control plays a major role in the "sexual revolution."



- **Wilma Rudolph** becomes the first African-American woman to receive 3 gold medals in the Olympics, after winning the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and the 400-meter relay team. In the following years, Rudolph becomes the first woman to receive six additional awards for her athleticism and continues to be one of the most celebrated female athletes of all time. Her accomplishments broke down gender barriers in previously all-male track and field events ([www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/rudo-wil.htm](http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/rudo-wil.htm)).

#### 1961

- **Eleanor Roosevelt** is appointed by President John F. Kennedy to chair the President's Commission on the Status of Women. She was also the driving force behind the creation of the Commission.

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*"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do."*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

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#### 1962

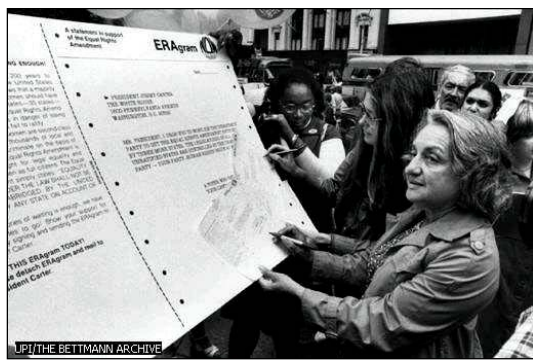
- **Rachel Carson** publishes *The Silent Spring*, which focuses international attention on the controversial use of pesticides and becomes the foundation of the modern environmental movement, leading to the

establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency. Carson, one of America's greatest nature writers, is known for her ability to combine lyrical prose with scientific facts to make her books both popular with the public and informative. Her work informs readers that they are but one part of nature, distinguished only by their ability to alter it, changing forever the way Americans view the world around them (<http://www.rachelcarson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=bio>).



## 1963

- Congress passes the Federal Equal Pay Act, promoting equal pay for equal work, creating the first step against sex discrimination.
- Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique is published. This work reveals the emptiness and frustration many women feel in their traditional roles as housewives and mothers and greatly contributes to the modern feminist movement ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).



- In spite of racial harassment, **Fannie Lou Hamer**, the daughter of a sharecropper in rural Mississippi, passes her voter registration test. Later she will lead a demonstration to gain access for African-Americans to the Democratic National Convention.

- Katherine Graham steps in as publisher of the *Washington Post* after the death of her husband. Once a reporter for the *San Francisco News* and the *Washington Post*, she runs the paper for the next ten years. During her tenure, the *Post* becomes one of the country's leading papers and wins acclaim for coverage of events such as the Watergate scandal. In 1998, she wins the Pulitzer Prize for biography for her autobiography, Personal History ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).



## 1964

- The U.S. Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, or national origin. This act also establishes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In the first five years of its existence, the committee receives 50,000 sex discrimination complaints.



- **Rita Moreno**, a native of Humacao, Puerto Rico, makes her acting debut in the film, *West Side Story*. Moreno would later become the first woman to win all four of the biggest awards in show business: an Oscar (film), a Tony (Broadway theater), an Emmy (television), and a Grammy (recording) (<http://welcome.topuertorico.org/culture/famouspr.shtml>).

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*"We've begun to raise daughters more like sons... but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters."*

*-Gloria Steinem*

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## 1965

- **Patsy Mink** is the first Japanese-American woman to be elected to Congress. She represents Hawaii.
- *Weeks v. Southern Bell* marks a major triumph in the fight against restrictive labor laws and company regulations on the hours and conditions of women's work, opening many previously exclusively male jobs to women.



- The Supreme Court rules that a Connecticut law banning contraceptives is unconstitutional. The *Griswold v. Connecticut* ruling allows married couples to use contraception. Later this law will be expanded to enable single women to use birth control. **Estelle Griswold**, the executive director of Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, is the woman who leads the legal battle for the elimination of Connecticut's anti-birth control statute ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/griswold.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/griswold.html)).

## 1966

- **Betty Friedan** founds The National Organization for Women (NOW).

- **Barbara Jordan** becomes the first woman ever elected to the Texas Senate and the first African-American member of the branch since 1883. Jordan remained with the Senate until 1972, leaving for the House of Representatives. At that point she became the first black congresswoman from the Deep South.
- **Constance Baker Motley** is appointed U.S. district judge, Southern District of New York, making her the first African-American woman appointed to the federal judiciary. Before her appointment, Motley was well known for her work in the battle for civil rights; she helped write briefs for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In 1964, Motley became the first woman elected to the New York State Senate and in 1965 became the first woman elected president of the borough of Manhattan ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/motley.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/motley.html)).



## 1967

- **Ann Uccello** is elected mayor of Hartford, Connecticut. She is the first female mayor of a capitol city in the U.S.
- **Muriel Siebert** becomes the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange ([www.search.eb.com/women](http://www.search.eb.com/women)).

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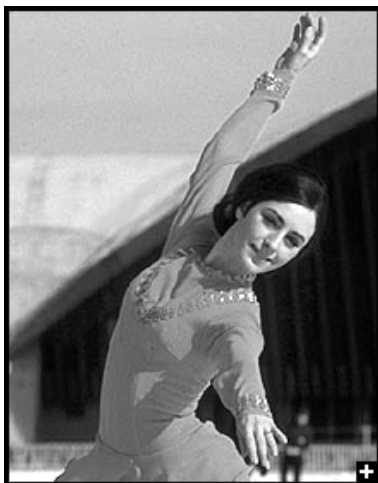
*"You can't have a congress that responds to the needs of the working man when there are practically no people here who represent him. And you're not going to have a society that understands its humanity if you don't have more women in government."*

*-Bella Abzug*

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## 1968

- **Barbara Watson** becomes the first woman and the first African-American to head a State Department Bureau when she is named assistant secretary in the State Department Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs.



- **Peggy Fleming** wins a gold medal for figure skating at the Olympics in Grenoble. The Grenoble Games are the first to be broadcast live and in color, and 19-year old Fleming's combination of athleticism and artistic expression help to turn figure

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30<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
PCSW

*Continuing Progress for Connecticut Women*

skating into the Olympic glory sport as well as establish new standards for artistic elegance on the ice ([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top\\_100/19/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top_100/19/)).

- **Shirley Chisholm** (D-NY) is the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress. Prior to her election to the U.S. House of Representatives, Chisholm managed day care centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and was active in the NAACP. She was also a state legislator for her Brooklyn district from 1964-68. During her Congressional career, she is known as a strong liberal who favors full employment proposals, as well as an opponent of the Vietnam War and weapons development. She will be a candidate for the Democratic nomination for U.S. president in 1972, winning 152 delegates before withdrawing from the race. She is also the founder of the National Women's Political Caucus (<http://www.blackhistory.eb.com>).



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*"A women's place is in the House and the Senate."  
-Gloria Schaffer*

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1969

- In the *Bowe v. Colgate-Palmolive* ruling the Supreme Court finds that women meeting the physical requirements can work in formerly male-dominated jobs.



- *Sesame Street* debuts. The show, created by **Joan Ganz Cooney**, is a product of her research on the use of television for preschool education. *Sesame Street* is now seen by millions of children all over the world, enhancing their learning and giving them a greater appreciation of the world around them (<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=43>).

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## 1970

- **Elizabeth P. Hoisington** and **Anna Mae Hays** of Pennsylvania become the first female generals in U.S. history when they are promoted to the rank of brigadier general.
- San Diego University establishes the first women's studies program in the country.
- On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage, NOW organizes its first Women's Strike for Equality and Justice. There are mass demonstrations in New York, where 50,000 people march.
- Oceanographer, conservationist, and entrepreneur **Dr. Sylvia Earle** (pictured right) leads the first team of women aquanauts on a two-week exploration of the ocean floor. In 1979, she will walk un-tethered on the sea floor at a depth lower than any other person before or since. Earle has authored more than 100 publications on marine science and technology and participated in many television productions and lectures all over the world. She is determined to inform the public of the importance of conserving the ocean's resources, reminding us that without water, we cannot survive (<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=54>).



## 1971

- The first battered women's shelter in the U.S., founded by **Cheryl Frank** and **Jacqueline Flenner**, opens in Urbana, Illinois.
  - *Reed v. Reed*, the first sex discrimination suit to reach the Supreme Court, is found in favor of the woman.
  - **Billie Jean King**, a professional tennis player, becomes the first woman athlete to win more than \$100,000 in a single season.



## 1972

- The Equal Rights Amendment is passed by the Senate and recommended to the states for ratification.

- *Ms. Magazine*, the first magazine owned, edited, and published by women for women is created by **Gloria Steinem**.




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*"I've yet to be on a campus where most women weren't worrying about some aspect of combining marriage, children, and a career. I've yet to find one where many men were worrying about the same thing."*  
*-Gloria Steinem*

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- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 states that, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded in any way from practicing in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance."
- The first emergency rape crisis hotline opens in Washington, D.C. By 1976, 400 independent rape crisis centers are operating nationwide, offering counseling, self-defense classes, and support groups.



- **Barbara C. Jordan**, an American lawyer, educator, and politician, becomes the first black congresswoman from the Deep South (Texas). She will become nationally known in 1974 during the House Judiciary Committee hearings on the impeachment of President Nixon. In 1977, Jordan would announce that she would not run for a fourth term and instead accepts a position at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas,

Austin, where she would serve until her death  
 (<http://www.blackhistory.eb.com>).

- **Chien-Shiung Wu** is appointed to an endowed professorship as the Pupin Professor of Physics at Columbia University. A pioneering physicist, Wu's experiments altered modern physical theory and changed the way we look at the universe. Due



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30<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
 PCSW

Continuing Progress for Connecticut Women



to her contributions to atomic research, Wu's career is decorated with many firsts. Among them, she is the first woman to win the prestigious Research Corporation Award and the Comstock Prize from the National Academy of Sciences. She is also the first living scientist to have an asteroid named after her  
(<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=174>)

## 1973

- In the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the U. S. Supreme Court declares all laws restricting a woman's right to abortion during the first two trimesters unconstitutional.
- **The General Assembly of Connecticut establishes the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW).**
- The Prudence Crandall Center opens in New Britain. It is the first women's shelter in Connecticut.
- The U.S. military is integrated when the women-only branches are eliminated.

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*"The most exciting thing about women's liberation is that this century will be able to take advantage of talent and potential genius that have been wasted because of taboos."*

*-Helen Reddy*

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## 1974

- Little League Baseball, Inc. announces that girls will now be eligible to compete in its 9,100 leagues.
- The Old Saybrook Veterans of Foreign Wars declares **Anna Louise James** citizen of the year. Upon her graduation from the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy Ms. James became the first black woman in Connecticut to be licensed as a pharmacist. After being turned down for membership in the Connecticut Pharmaceutical Association due to her gender, she joined her brother-in-law at his pharmacy in Old Saybrook. In 1918, Ms. James took over the pharmacy, and in 1922 she purchased the property. Until her retirement in 1967, James Pharmacy was open every day of the year (<http://courant.ctnow.com/projects/bhistory/james.html>).
- **Adrianne Baughns-Wallace** becomes the first female television broadcaster in Connecticut as well as the first African-American woman broadcaster in New England ([www.chwf.org](http://www.chwf.org)).

## 1975

- New federal rules come into effect for many of the nation's schools, requiring equal treatment for females and males in admissions, financial aid, classrooms, dress codes, and auxiliary activities.
- **Ella Grasso** of Connecticut becomes the first woman in U.S. history to be elected governor without having followed her husband to office. She will serve two terms as the Governor of Connecticut and always upholds her promise to keep the government responsive to its people and within the necessary fiscal limits. Considered a liberal Democrat and always looking for ways to economize, she once returns to the state treasury a \$7,000 raise she cannot legally refuse. Grasso endears herself to her constituents when, during the 1978 blizzard, she stays at the State Armory around the clock, directing emergency operations and making frequent television appearances ([www.chwf.org/browse/inductees/grass.htm](http://www.chwf.org/browse/inductees/grass.htm)).



- **Edythe J. Gaines** becomes the first African-American and one of the first two women to become superintendent of a Connecticut school, reaching this milestone in Hartford ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).

## 1976

- The United Nation's "Decade of Women" begins.
- **Barbara Walters** becomes the first woman co-anchor of the evening news, changing the face of broadcasting forever. At the time, she is the highest-paid news broadcaster. Walters would later help shape prime-time magazine shows and still co-hosts ABC's 20/20 ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).



## 1978

- **Toni Morrison** (pictured) of Lorain, Ohio is the first African-American woman to win the National Book Critics Circle Award. She wins for Song of Solomon.
- Connecticut police agree to arrest husbands for spousal abuse even if the wife does not bring charges.
- **Marcia Frederick** of Milford, Connecticut becomes the first American woman to win a gold medal in the World Gymnastics championships in Strasbourg, France. She competes in the uneven bars.
- **Ellen Ash Peters** is the first woman to be named a justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. She is named Chief Justice six years later. Previously, she was a professor of law at Yale University ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/peters.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/peters.html)).
- **Geraldine Ferraro** is elected to Congress from New York (pictured right). She will serve three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, compiling a liberal voting record. In Congress, Ferraro spearheaded efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and sponsored the Women's Economic Equity Act of 1984. She also served as chief of the Democratic platform committee, a job that would help win her the vice-presidential nomination in 1984. Running with Walter Mondale against incumbent Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, Ferraro is the first woman vice-presidential candidate on a national party ticket. Although she loses the election, Ferraro will remain in the public eye, serving as an international policy expert to this day and writing several books (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/researchtools/articlearchives/womhst/gerald.htm#top>).



## 1980

- Election polls bring light to the "Gender Gap." For the first time women report different political priorities than men.
- Connecticut passes a law defining and prohibiting sexual harassment under Connecticut's Unfair Employment Practices Act.

- **Paula D. Hughes** of Greenwich, Connecticut is the first woman to be appointed to one of the seven seats on the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors. She is known as the Postal Governess (Connecticut Firsts, 1996).
- **Edna Noemi Negron Rosario** establishes the first family resource center and school-based health clinic in the nation ([www.cwhf.org](http://www.cwhf.org)).
- Casa de Esperanza opens a shelter for battered Latinas in the Twin Cities.

1981

- **Sandra Day O'Connor** is the first woman to be named to the U.S. Supreme Court. Earlier in her career, Arizona law firms wouldn't hire her because she was a woman. Undaunted, O'Connor started her own law firm. She went on to serve as assistant Attorney General, an Arizona State Senator, and a judge on both the district and state levels before being appointed to the highest court in the nation ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).




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*"Do the best you can in every task, no matter how unimportant it may seem at the time.  
No one learns more about a problem than the person at the bottom."  
-Sandra Day O'Connor*

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1982

- The deadline for the ERA ratification expires. Only 35 of the necessary 38 states voted to ratify it, therefore it does not become an amendment.
- Two women become the first female municipal firefighters in Connecticut.
- **Maya Lin**, a Chinese-American woman studying architecture at Yale College, enters and wins a contest designing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The structure, once deemed highly controversial, continues to be admired in Washington, D.C. ([www.greatbuildings.com](http://www.greatbuildings.com)).

1983

- **Dr. Sally K. Ride** of Encino, CA is America's first female astronaut. She spends six days in space during her first flight and her second mission lasts 197 hours. Later she becomes part of the Presidential Commission that investigates the Challenger explosion ([www.lucidcafe.com/lucidcafe/library/96may/ride.html](http://www.lucidcafe.com/lucidcafe/library/96may/ride.html)).



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*"For women there are, undoubtedly, great difficulties in the path, but so much more to overcome. First, no woman should say, 'I am but a woman!' But a woman! What more can you ask to be?"*

*-Maria Mitchell*

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## 1984

- **Jody Cohen** comes to Connecticut to serve as Associate Rabbi and Educator to Congregation Beth Israel in West Hartford. While there, Cohen establishes the first synagogue-run day care center in North America for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Today she serves as regional director of the Southeast Council, Union of American Hebrew Congregations ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/cohen.html](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/cohen.html)).

- **Sandra Cisneros** publishes her best-known work, The House on Mango Street. Cisneros is well known for her short story collections that depict many of her childhood experiences. She writes about her Mexican father and Chicana mother and examines the issues of poverty, cultural suppression, self-identity, and gender roles (<http://www.lasmujeres.com/sandracisneros/cisnerosbio.shtml>)



- **Bonnie Blair** makes her Olympic debut. The 20-year old speed skater places 8<sup>th</sup> in the 500-meter race, but would never again lose an Olympic 500 meter race. Blair would win consecutive gold medals in the 500-meter at the 1988 and '92 Games (where she also wins the 1,000m) and would conclude her career two years later by winning the 500- and 1,000-meter races at the '94 Games in Lillehammer ([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top\\_100/7/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top_100/7/)).



## 1985

- **Wilma Mankiller** becomes the first woman in history to lead a major Native American tribe when she is named principle chief of the Cherokee nation. Mankiller is responsible for 139,000 people and a \$69 million budget (<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=104>).

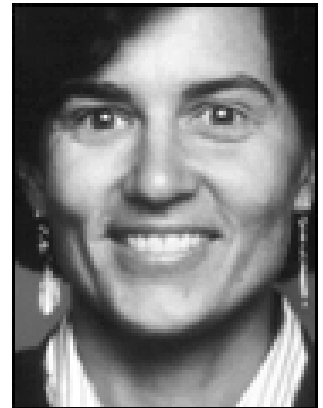
- **Tracy Thurman** of Connecticut is the first woman to win a civil suit as a battered wife. This sets the stage for major reform of state statutes regarding domestic violence.
- **Denise L. Matthews** of Old Saybrook, Connecticut becomes the first woman to graduate at the head of her class at a military academy. She graduates from the Coast Guard Academy in New London, and, given her pick of assignments, elects to serve on a buoy tender in Honolulu (Connecticut Firsts, 1996).



- **Betty C. Tianti** is the first woman president of a state AFL-CIO federation. In 1988 she becomes Connecticut's first female Commissioner of Labor. Tianti was employed at American Thread Company in Willimantic starting in 1956 and became a member of the Textile Workers' Union of America. Within a few short years she worked her way up to become president of the union. In 1967, she left her job and became the first woman deputy director of the union's Committee on Political Education (COPE). Three years later she became the first woman agent of the State Board of Labor Relations in Connecticut. She became president of COPE in 1974 and later became the first woman secretary-treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/tianti.htm](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/tianti.htm)).

## 1986

- National Women in Sports Day is created by a joint congressional resolution to fight gender discrimination in sports.
- The U.S. Supreme Court rules that sexual harassment violates federal law and is a form of illegal job discrimination.
- **Amy Eilberg** becomes the first woman ordained as a rabbi by the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly.
- **Ann Bancroft**, a teacher, athlete, and respected polar explorer (pictured right) is the first woman to travel across the ice to the North Pole. In 1992, Bancroft will be continue her record-breaking adventures, becoming the first woman to travel east to west across Greenland on skis, leading the first American women's team. She will also lead the American Women's Expedition in 1993, a group of four women who ski over 600 miles pulling heavy sleds to the South Pole (<http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=16>).





## 1987

- The U.S. Census Bureau releases a report that states that the average woman earned only 64% of the median male income in 1984.
- The U.S. Supreme Court rules that states have the right to deny unemployment to women who leave work because of pregnancy.
- **Carrie Saxon Perry** is elected mayor of Hartford, Connecticut. She is the first black woman to be elected mayor of a New England city.
- **Suzanne Cutler** of Colchester, Connecticut is the first woman in the nation to be named executive vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank (Connecticut Firsts, 1996).

## 1988

- A coalition of women marches on Washington in support of the passage of the proposed Family and Medical Leave Act.

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*"If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time."*

*-Marian Wright Edleman*

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## 1989

- The PCSW worked with Connecticut state legislative leaders to create the first family and medical leave protections in the county.

## 1990

- Nearly 10% of the armed forces in the Middle East are women. More women than ever before are in combat support roles.
- One of the most progressive laws in the country concerning women's reproductive rights is passed in Connecticut.
- **Commander Darlene Iskra** becomes the first woman to command a U.S. Navy Ship ([www.userpages.aug.com](http://www.userpages.aug.com)).



- **Antonia Novello** is the first woman and the first Hispanic to become the Surgeon General of the United States and "was among the first to recognize the need to focus on women with AIDS and on neonatal transmission of HIV," ([www.greatwomen.org](http://www.greatwomen.org)).



## 1991

- **Anita Hill** (pictured below) brings charges of sexual harassment against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, introducing sexual harassment to the public consciousness.



- **Barbara Kennelly** (D-CT) is appointed as one of the three Chief Deputy Majority Whips in the U.S. House of Representatives, (pictured right) making her the highest-ranking woman in the House. Kennelly is the first woman in history to serve as Deputy Majority Whip and the first to serve on the House Intelligence Committee. She serves six years on the House Intelligence

Committee and was the first woman to chair one of its subcommittees. In 1995, Representative Kennelly assumes yet another leadership position as the Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus ([www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/kennelly.htm](http://www.cwhf.org/browse/inductees/kennelly.htm)).



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*"In a society where the rights and potential of women are constrained, no man can be truly free. He may have power, but he will not have freedom."*

*-Mary Robinson*

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## 1992

- The American Medical Association issues guidelines to physicians recommending that they ask female patients if they have been abused. These guidelines are in response to the prevalence of domestic violence cases.
- **Carol Moseley-Braun** is the first African-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate.
- Connecticut passes an act concerning sexual harassment education and training in the workplace. This act requires employers to train their managers about sexual harassment.
- **Lucille Roybal-Allard** became the first Mexican-American woman to be elected into the House of Representatives.



- **Nydia M. Velazquez** is the first Puerto Rican woman elected to Congress, representing New York's 12<sup>th</sup> district. She was born in 1953 in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, and was formerly the director of the Department of Puerto Rican

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30<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
PCSW

*Continuing Progress for Connecticut Women*

Community Affairs in the United States for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In addition, she has been a professor at the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao and adjunct professor at City University of New York's Hunter College ([www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/congress/velazquez.htm](http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/congress/velazquez.htm)).

### 1993

- An act concerning the gender and racial composition of the membership of Connecticut state boards, commissions, committees, and councils is passed.
- *Take our Daughters to Work Day*, a project of the MS. Foundation, debuts in Connecticut. It is designed to build girls' self-esteem and open their eyes to a variety of career possibilities for women.



- **Janet Reno** is the first female Attorney General of the United States. She received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Cornell University in 1960 and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1963. Prior to serving under the Clinton Administration she was elected to the Office of State Attorney in Florida ([www.wic.org/bio/jreno/htm](http://www.wic.org/bio/jreno/htm)).

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*"Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead."*  
-Louisa May Alcott

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### 1994

- The UConn President's Commission on the Status of Women finds that gender distribution in employees at the University of Connecticut is lacking. The Commission finds that although women make up 49% of employees, the majority holds clerical and low ranking positions. Women fill only 30% of faculty positions, and of that only 15% are full professors.
- **Lt. Kara Hultgreen** is recognized as the first woman fully qualified combat fighter pilot, and, sadly, the first woman combat fighter pilot to die in service ([www.userpages.aug.com](http://www.userpages.aug.com)).

- **Nancy Wyman** is the first woman in Connecticut's history to be elected State Comptroller. Wyman demonstrates great leadership throughout her term by advocating issues concerning women, children, and the elderly. Wyman's success is evident as she is re-elected in 1998 and again in 2002. (PCSW).



- After serving in the state House of Representatives for ten years, **M. Jodi Rell** is elected Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut, the first republican woman to hold the position. During her time in office, Rell has championed several issues. In 2001, she began an anti-violence campaign in the state to find solutions to violence and to find out why so many people have become numb to it. She also works to bring attention to breast cancer awareness and veterans' affairs and plays a key role in increasing

funds for firefighters in the state

(<http://www.state.ct.us/otlg/rell.asp?page=ltgovbio>).

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*"I'm a feminist and I'm proud to be a lifelong one. It's as natural as breathing, feeling and thinking. Never go back, never apologize, and never forget we're half the human race."*

*-Bella Abzug*

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## 1995

- The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is celebrated.

## 1996

- The United Nations fourth World Conference on Women's Issues is held in Beijing, China.
- The first professional women's basketball game ever held in the nation is held by the American Basketball League's New England Blizzard at the Hartford Civic Center (Connecticut Firsts, 1996)

1997

- **Madeline Albright** is sworn in as Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton. She is the first woman to hold this position and is the highest ranking woman in U.S. government. An expert on international affairs, Albright had been a national security advisor to President Carter, a professor at Georgetown University, and an ambassador to the United Nations prior to her appointment as Secretary of State ([http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth\\_look/womens\\_history/profiles/index.asp](http://www.star.niu.edu/in-depth_look/womens_history/profiles/index.asp)).



1997

- **Aida Alvarez** becomes the first Puerto Rican and the first Latina to be an administrator of the United States Small Business Administration (SBA).

1998

- **Susan Bysiewicz** is elected Secretary of the State in Connecticut, having previously served three terms in the state legislature. Since taking office, Bysiewicz has advocated for greater transparency in the government, more voter participation, and privacy protection. (PCSW)



**Denise Nappier** breaks multiple barriers as she becomes the first woman and first African-American to be elected state treasurer. Throughout her term, Napier improves the state college savings program, making it among the nation's best. She also continuously supports small, women, and minority owned businesses by offering them opportunities to work with the Treasury's investment managers (PCSW).



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*"The world is round and the place which may seem like the end, may also be only the beginning."*

*-Ivy Baker Priest*

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## 1999

- In Connecticut, an act requiring health insurers to cover prescription birth control is passed. This new law requires that whenever a health insurer covers a prescription, they also must cover all FDA approved contraceptive methods.



- The U.S. Women's National Team wins the World Cup, defeating China 5-4 in a penalty kick shoot out after regulation ends in a 0-0 tie. The team's victory helps elevate women's soccer to the global stage and earns them the title of *Sports Illustrated*'s Sportswomen of the Year (<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/features/2002/sportsman/1999/>).

## 2000

- **Adrienne Baughns-Wallace** is inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. *The Hartford Courant* calls her "the most watched woman in Connecticut"

(<http://www.cwhf.org/browse/98inductees.html>).





- **Hilary Rodham Clinton** (D-NY) is elected to the U.S. Senate. Senator Clinton is the first First Lady to be elected to the Senate and the first woman elected statewide in New York. During her time as First Lady she worked mostly on healthcare issues and also supported anti-crime measures such as the Brady Bill. Since becoming a Senator, Clinton has been an advocate for children and families as well as supporting measures to expand the economy through tax credits and investment in small business and backing the Patient's Bill of Rights. Senator Clinton is not known just in the U.S. for her political work. She is also recognized around the world as an advocate for democracy, religious tolerance, and human rights ([http://clinton.senate.gov/about\\_hrc.html](http://clinton.senate.gov/about_hrc.html)).




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*"...If women are healthy and educated, their families flourish. If women are free from violence, their families thrive. If women have a chance to work and earn as full and equal partners in society, their families will prosper."*  
*-Hilary Rodham Clinton*

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- **Jackie Joyner-Kersey** is voted *Sports Illustrated* for Women's Greatest Female Athlete of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Kersee, a member of the first generation to benefit from Title IX, participated in both basketball and track in high school. She went on to win three gold, one silver and two bronze medals over four consecutive Olympic games for track and field events ([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top\\_100/30/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/siforwomen/top_100/30/)).

**2001**

- The U.S. Congress that convenes in January of 2001 has a record number of 74 female members. The House of Representatives has 61, while the Senate has 13 (PCSW).



- ESPN's list of the top North American athletes of the century includes many women. Among them are **Martina Navratilova, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Wilma Rudolph, Chris Evert** (pictured), **Billie Jean King, Althea Gibson**, and **Bonnie Blair** (PCSW).




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*"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'"*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

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## 2002

- Between 1998 and 2008, women's participation in the labor force is expected to increase by 15% while men will see an increase of only 10%. As a result, women will increase their share of the labor force from 46% to 48% (PCSW).
- Since 1984, the number of women in graduate schools has exceeded the number of men (PCSW).
- In Connecticut, women make up 31% of the State Legislature. In the Senate, women hold 8 out of the 36 seats and in the House of Representatives they hold 49 out of the 151 seats. Currently, women hold a majority of statewide constitutional offices: Lt. Governor, Secretary of the State, Comptroller, and Treasurer. In addition, a woman is also Speaker of the House, and 32% of committee chairships are held by women (PCSW).



- **Halle Berry** becomes the first woman of color to receive an Oscar for Best Actress.
- U.S. Congresswoman **Nancy Pelosi** of California is elected Democratic leader by an overwhelming majority of House Democrats, making her the highest-ranking woman in the history of the U.S. Congress and the first woman to lead a major political party. Prior to her election as House Minority Leader, Pelosi had been a member of Congress for 15 years. She has served on



several important and prestigious committees such as the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Appropriations Committee. Along with leading her party and serving as its voice, Pelosi also has her own agenda and has focused on issues of key importance to the nation's families, such as education and healthcare, throughout her career (<http://democraticleader.house.gov/>).

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*"We must rekindle a spirit in our hearts, something very American, something still alive, but buried beneath a thickening layer of skepticism and doubt."*  
*-Elizabeth Dole*

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- **Elizabeth Dole** (R-NC) is elected to the U.S. Senate. Dole had led a long and illustrious career in public service prior to her election to Congress. She was Federal Trade Commissioner from 1974 to 1979, President Reagan appointed her U.S. Secretary of Labor in 1983. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush appointed Dole Secretary of Labor, and in that post she continued her dedication to public safety until leaving in 1990 to assume the Presidency of the American Red Cross. Dole held this position until 1999 when she left to run for President of the United States. Although she dropped out of the race before the primaries, Dole continued her pursuit of public office, announcing her intent to run for the retiring Senator Jesse Helm's seat and achieving her goal ([http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/senators/one\\_item\\_an](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/senators/one_item_an)



2003

**The PCSW celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

- **Moira K. Lyons** (D-Stamford) is unanimously elected to her third term as Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives. She is the first woman to serve as Speaker, the legislature's highest position. Prior to her election, she served as House Majority Leader. Representative Lyons has received many awards for her dedication and leadership in politics, including national recognition as one of *Good Housekeeping's* "Top Ten Women in Government." She is dedicated to family issues, including health care reform and early childhood education (<http://www.cga.state.ct.us/hdo/146/bio146/asp>).



- On December 29<sup>th</sup>, the **University of Connecticut Women's Basketball Team** ties the NCAA All-time win mark with 69 consecutive wins. The game was played in front of their 23<sup>rd</sup> straight sell-out crowd of 16,294 at the Hartford Civic Center ([www.uconnhuskies.com](http://www.uconnhuskies.com)).

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*"I always feel the movement is sort of a mosaic. Each of us puts in one little stone, and you get a great mosaic at the end."*

*-Alice Paul*

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## **The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women**

Tanya Meck, *Chair*  
Susan O. Storey, *Vice Chair*  
Robin L. Sheppard, *Secretary*  
Anne Dailey, *Treasurer*  
Marcia A. Cavanaugh  
Barbara DeBaptiste  
Adrienne Farrar Houel  
Sandra Hassan  
Patricia T. Hendel  
Jean L. Rexford  
Cindy R. Slane  
Carrie Gallagher Sussman  
Patricia E. M. Whitcombe

### **Legislative Members**

Senator John A. Kissel  
Senator Andrew J. McDonald  
Representative Michael P. Lawlor  
Representative Robert Farr

### **Honorary Members**

Connie Dice  
Patricia Russo

### **Staff**

Leslie J. Brett, *Executive Director*  
Susan H. Hoover, *Special Projects Director*  
Barbara Potopowitz, *Public Information Officer*  
Natasha M. Pierre, *Legislative Analyst*  
Rosemary Lopez, *Secretary to the Executive Director*  
Lillie Wright, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

### **Grant Funded Staff**

Jacquelyn Salmon, *Nontraditional Employment for Women Program Manager*  
Doreen Fredette, *Nontraditional Employment for Women Assistant*

### **Interns**

Nikki Cruz  
Nicole Graf  
Kirsten Rigney

**T**he Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) was created in 1973 by an act of the Connecticut State Legislature. Under Sections 46a-1 through 46a-6 of the Connecticut General Statutes, a seventeen member Commission, staff, and volunteers work to eliminate sex discrimination in Connecticut.

Five Commission members are appointed by the Governor, four are appointed by the Speaker of the House, and four are appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. These members are unpaid and serve five-year terms. Co-Chairs of the Judiciary committee and ranking minority members also serve on the Commission.

As required by statute, the PCSW studies all matters concerning women; informs the leaders of business, education, and government about the nature and scope of sex discrimination; serves as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women; promotes consideration of qualified women to all levels of government positions; and works with state agencies to assess programs and practices as they affect women (C.G.S. 46a-4).